NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service
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NATIONAL HANDBOOK OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES
450 – NHCP **March 30, 2017**
NOTICE 166

Purpose. This notice transmits new or revised national Conservation Practice Standards (CPSs), along with an updated index, for insertion into the National Handbook of Conservation Practices (NHCP). In addition, notes are included to highlight key changes made to each document.

Effective Date. This notice is effective upon receipt.

Explanation of Changes. New, revised or deleted national CPSs are as follows:

Brush Management (Code 314) – The brush management standard was reviewed and updated to reflect current agency policy and science. Changes also were made to bring the standard up to date on current ecological site descriptions. Added statement to the "purpose" that when standard is applied successively, it facilitates the process to achieve the desired plant community. "Criteria" section was changed to add statement to ensure practice area has the correct plant diversity for the desired plant community after completion.

Herbaceous Weed Treatment (Code 315) – The herbaceous weed control standard was reviewed and updated to reflect current agency policy and science. Changes also were made to bring standard up to date on current ecological site descriptions. "Purpose" was adjusted to focus on consideration of reducing wildfire fuel loading. Two "purposes" were added that reflect agency consideration and focus on improving rangeland health and that when the standard is applied successively, it facilitates the process to achieve the desired plant community.

Lined Waterway or Outlet (Code 468) – The entire document is edited for clarity. Restriction for maximum capacity is removed. Criteria for minimum capacity is modified to include provisions for minimal slopes and downstream conveyance capacities. Specific "n" values and design criteria are replaced with references to NRCS National Engineering Handbook. References and citations are updated to the current editions.

Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) – The prescribed grazing standard was reviewed and updated to reflect current agency policy and science. Changes were made to clarify and recognize the benefits of prescribed grazing on soil health. Clarified "practice description" by adding "…with the intent to achieve specific ecological, economic, and management objectives." In "purpose," the concept of plant community "structure" was added when addressing plant communities, and added verbiage identifying the benefits of this practice to soil health.

DIST: S, R, L, and National Center Director

Restoration of Rare or Declining Natural Communities (Code 643) – The title changed title from "Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats" to "Restoration of Rare or Declining Natural Communities." The term "habitats" is changed to "natural communities" to encompass not only wildlife resource concerns, but also activities targeting a unique plant community. Unique to restoration efforts of rare and declining natural communities, the restoration of the abiotic conditions is typically necessary, prior to restoration of biotic conditions. Broadened the scope to include abiotic restoration and restoration of plant communities.

Pen and ink Changes to existing CPSs are as follows:

Building Envelope Improvement (Code 672) – The reference to the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) standard S401.2, "Guidelines for Use of Thermal Insulation in Agricultural Buildings," has been changed to National Instruction 210-301, "Use of Spray Polyurethane Foam Insulation and Vapor Retarders for Building Envelope Improvement." The requirements in this instruction supersede ASABE S401.2 where referenced in CPS 672 with respect to spray polyurethane foam regarding fire safety, and vapor retarders requirements for all insulating materials.

Saturated Buffer (Code 604) – The pen and ink changes clarify the distinction between drainage system capacity and saturated buffer capacity. They also clarify options available for determining drainage system capacity. The changes also modified criteria for minimum saturated buffer design capacity from 15 percent of drainage system capacity to 5 percent of drainage system capacity. Based on DRAINMOD simulations using historical weather data, and typical local soils and drainage systems in Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois; it was determined that a 5-percent value would be more appropriate as a minimum saturated buffer flow criteria. The remainder of the edits were editorial in nature intended to clarify and simplify the standard.

Filing Instructions. If a hardcopy of the NHCP is maintained, replace the "Contents" section (pages i through vi, dated September 2015) with the revised pages found at http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=22299

Remove and archive, as appropriate, the following existing practice standards:

Brush Management (Code 314), dated September 2009
Herbaceous Weed Control (Code 315), dated April, 2010
Lined Waterway or Outlet (Code 468), dated September 2010
Prescribed Grazing (Code 528), dated September 2010
Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats (Code 643), dated September 2010
Building Envelope Improvement (Code 672), dated April 2013
Saturated Buffer (Code 604), dated May 2016

This notice, and each of the conservation practice standards included with this notice, can be accessed electronically through the NRCS Web site at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/technical/cp/ncps/?cid=nrcs143_026849

Federal Register Notice

NRCS published a notice to solicit public comments about how to improve specific agency conservation practice standards in the *Federal Register* on April 4, 2016, for a 30-day comment periods. Comments from the public were accepted during the comment period.

Guidance to the States and the Pacific Islands and Caribbean Areas for complying with the provisions of the 1996 Farm Bill that require advertising for public comment prior to revising NRCS State-level technical guides can be found in Title 450, General Manual, Part 401, Subpart B, Section 401.19.

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